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Navy SeaPerch Challenge Showcased in Los Angeles

Filed under [COMMUNITY SUPPORT](#), [RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT](#), [U.S. NAVY](#) (NO COMMENTS)

By **Lt. Eric Banker**, *perioperative nurse and command diversity officer*, [Naval Medical Center San Diego](#)








Sailors and students from local Los Angeles schools who participated in the 2013 SeaPerch Challenge. (Photo courtesy of Lt. Eric Banker)

I was very excited to participate in the “2013 SeaPerch Challenge” at the USS Iowa (BB-61), retired naval vessel and now a museum, in San Pedro, Calif. I was lucky enough to help comprise a group of 20 hospital corpsmen and medical Naval Officers from [Naval Medical Center San Diego](#) and [Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton](#) to assist in this event promoting Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM). During the event I was informed that this was the first of its kind to take place in the Los Angeles area which made it even more

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eventful!

There were 19 schools from the Los Angeles and surrounding areas competing in an exciting underwater navigation obstacle course. The small pools were quartered off and only offered a small hole in the fencing to navigate their Remote Operated Vehicles through, and the students had to get through each quarter and back again in the best time they could. The fastest time was 24 seconds! The course also offered extra points toward winning by collecting rings that were located in different areas in the small pool and had to be brought back to the beginning of the course. The fascination, competition, and excitement were obvious in the creation of their vehicles and coordinated teamwork during the competition.

Hundreds of students, parents, teachers, and visitors swarmed the pier where the Iowa showcased its fantastic history and hosted this great event. The medical professionals that hosted our booth were knowledgeable, inviting, and informative to the myriad of people asking questions about the Navy, and Navy medicine; maintaining that spark of interest in STEM to push our nation’s future generation to higher education and bigger and better inventions to come.

The participating Navy personnel expressed their enthusiasm and were honored to be a part of this awesome event. Hospital Corpsman Seaman Elysia Curry said, “Not only was this a great STEM event where I was able to interact with students, parents, and teachers from schools all over the area, but it was my first time on a Navy ship and talking with an admiral! It was a great day and I had a great time.”

Bringing this opportunity to my shipmates and seeing the gratification they received from this event just made the day that much more satisfying.

Editor’s note: Banker has served 21 years in the U.S. Navy and started his career as a Hospital Corpsman specializing as a Surgical Technologist serving aboard the USS Ogden, Naval Medical Center San Diego, Fleet Surgical Team 5, instructor at Naval School of Health Sciences, San Diego, and 1st MLG Camp Pendleton. He was commissioned in 2008 serving at Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton where he completed Perioperative Nursing School and currently works at Naval Medical Center San Diego. He has been awarded the Naval Commendation Medal and Naval Achievement Medal (with two gold stars), Joint Meritorious Unit Citation, Meritorious Unit Citation, Navy Good Conduct Medal (with four bronze stars), and several other medals and ribbons.

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